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# **Exocentric Compounds in English and Punjabi: A Morpho-Semantic Analysis of NN Formations**

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## **Abstract**

The paper provides new insight into the analysis of exocentric compounds in English and Punjabi by introducing a new step-by-step mechanism devised with the help of cognitive and cultural linguistics. The main purpose of the study is to show that exocentric compounds are very productive in the Indo -European languages. The current study claims that every exocentric compound is metaphoric in nature. Every constituent in an exocentric compound carries several interpretations based on specific metonymic relations and cultural knowledge. The meaning of one constituent aids and activates the interpretation of another constituent. In this paper<sup>1</sup>, only four examples of NN compounds are discussed in detail. Although the study is not a comparative analysis in actual sense, however, the formations of such compounds in English are also analyzed to show the applicability of the mechanism in other languages as well. The results revealed that the above mechanism is equally applicable in both the languages and supports the metaphoric interpretation in exocentric compounds. The study also nullifies the claims about the non-productivity and unpredictability of the exocentric compounds.

**Keywords:** cognitive linguistics, cultural linguistics, exocentric compounds, English, Punjabi

## **Introduction**

Compounding, a word formation device, is found in all the world languages. It is a process where two words are combined together to form new words. It not only helps in increasing the lexicons of a language, but also provides new lexical devices that help in expressing the novel ideas. Compounding is a comparatively free process that involves a large set of open-class lexical items enriched with specific meanings. The indivisibility and specific sequential order of the

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constituents is the main strength of compounds. Although it is a very productive phenomenon in the languages of the world, there is a big difference in the syntactic and semantic formations due to the cultural and language differences. Primarily because of the difference in languages and cultures there are various definitions and classifications of compounds. Although it is noted that it is not easy to have a perfect definition of compounds (Montermini, [2010](#)). The question about the number of constituents in a compound has interested many linguists. Compounds are formed with two words (Selkirk, 1982). Nevertheless, existing definitions note that compound is a word formed with the combination of two or more words (Fabb, [1998](#)).

Like the differences in the definitional properties of compounds, there is no satisfactory classification of compounds as well. Due to language differences and the scholar's view point, they are classified into various categories and subcategories. Bloomfield ([1933](#)) consequently resolved this issue by classifying compounds into endocentric and exocentric. His distinction is based on presence and absence of head. The compounds that are the hyponyms of their heads are endocentric (e.g., *blackbird* and *door-knob*) and the compounds that do not have a semantic head are exocentric (e.g., *gadabout* and *turnkey*).

In the main linguistic research field, the endocentric compounds always received a special attention. The scholars (Bloomfield, [1933](#); Downing, [1977](#); Lees, [1968](#)) pay special focus on endocentric compounds. On the other hand, the exocentric compounds always remained a marginalized category due to their unpredictable meaning and non-headed structure. These compounds pose a real challenge for the researchers due to their unpredictable and idiosyncratic meaning. Another reason for ignoring these formations is the so-called myth that these compounds lack productivity patterns in the languages of the world. Bauer ([2008](#)) captures the lack of productivity of exocentric compounds in English and other languages of the world. He opines that in very few languages these compounds are productive and hence the most frequent types. This is the reason that there are very few initial theoretical and typological studies of exocentric compounds.

Contrary to the claims made above, New Indo-Aryan languages especially Punjabi-a New Indo-Aryan language, on the basis of collected data, exhibits the productivity of the compounds. Unfortunately, the Indo-Aryan languages could not get the attention of the researchers. In Punjabi the only available work is that of Akhtar ([1992](#)). He classifies compounds in more than 25 structural patterns and is noted for his ingenious efforts and devotion towards Punjabi compounds in

general. All types of compounds such as endocentric, exocentric, copulative, reduplicative etc. are included in the work. The study talks about the structural patterns, but no focus is paid towards the metaphoric interpretation of the compounds. Keeping in view the scenario, the present researcher, therefore, thought it befitting to endeavor to study the phenomenon in question.

The point for the discussion is whether the exocentric compounds are less productive and their meaning is unpredictable? This is the major question the study is interested to answer. Furthermore, the study is interested to show that every exocentric compound has a metaphoric meaning, based on some metonymic relations and cultural knowledge. In every exocentric compound, every constituent has several hidden interpretations and one of those becomes activated with the meaning of the second constituent added to it. This feature of these formations, gives birth to another question that how the compound arrives from a literal meaning at a metaphoric interpretation? Is there some specific mechanism working behind the metaphoric interpretation? If yes, then what is that? These are the questions that provide the basis for this research.

### Purpose of the Study

In light of the above scenario, the main focus of the research is to look into the process of exocentric compound formation in Punjabi. The study aims to shed some light on the role played by the metonymic relations based on some cultural knowledge obtained through metonymic relations in arriving at the metaphoric meaning. The study presents a new theoretical framework,-helpful in bridging the gap of lexical meaning and their metaphorical extension. It is hoped that the theoretical framework would not only be helpful in arriving at the metaphoric meaning in exocentric compounds, but also be helpful in providing valuable information in coining new exocentric compounds, compiling dictionaries, developing electronic lexical databases for machine translation, lexical processing and information retrieval.

As discussed above, English has received a lot of research attention, while the NIA languages are the neglected ones. The study with the help of data in Punjabi wants to disprove these claims (Bauer, [2008](#)). Although the study gives no comparison in the features of exocentric compounds in Punjabi and English, it however looks at the extent; the mechanism is applicable in the two languages?

The study claims that every exocentric compound has metaphoric interpretation based on some metonymic relations and cultural knowledge, so it is important to have a brief look at these topics.

## Language and Culture

Language and culture are inextricably knitted together. The cultural models and values are the main source of linguistic activities. All the linguistic and discourse events used by the speech community are surrounded by culture. In the linguistic structure, the pervasive and significant reflection of culture is obviously reflected (Langacker, [1999](#)). According to Langacker ([2002](#)), the usage of any linguistic event is in fact the reflection of contextual understanding. The user is well aware of the event's interactive forces along with the social interaction embedded in a culture (P. 14). Lakoff ([1989](#)) states that all the experimental domain's structurally complexed categories are culture-specific and based on the personal or group experiences, which are actually part of an individual or group cognition. Therefore, it is better to talk something on cognition and language.

## Cognition and Language

Taylor ([2002](#)) states that around the late 1970's after receiving inputs from various disciplines, cognitive linguistics emerged as a linguistic theory. This approach is interested in language and how the language knowledge is acquired. It also aims at finding out ~~that~~ how the natural languages contribute to our worldly knowledge (Taylor, [2002](#)). Cognition means the identification of meaning and its conceptualization. For the adequate understanding of natural languages, cognitive linguistics proves to be the best approach (Langacker, [2000b](#)).

All the emotive experiences, all types of mental experiences, novel and established conceptions along with immediate sensory and emotive experiences fall under the umbrella of conceptualization. The linguistic meaning is a mental activity embedded in the socio-culturally grounded human-minds (Langacker, [2002](#); p. 26). According to cognitive linguistics, conceptualization exhibits structure and organization, which can be justified by the means of wide applicability to diverse sets of data, grounding in well-established cognitive phenomena, predictions concerning distribution and well-informed motivation from cross-linguistic distribution and intuitive naturalness (*ibid.*). The native speakers of every language use various metaphors/metonymies in their daily conversation to arrive at the meaning of newly coined words. The next section is a brief description of these.

## Metaphor

Lakoff & Johnson ([1980](#)) state, 'in cognitive linguistics, the devices that allow us to understand one domain of experience in terms of another are known as

metaphors' (p. 117). There is a unidirectional relation between the domains, as one domain is conceived in terms of another (Lakoff, 1993). In metaphors, two distinct concepts are brought into view by mapping one upon another. There are two types of domains in metaphors; source and target. The source is more concrete and the target is more abstract (Lakoff, 1993; Kövecses, 2000). The main purpose of mapping is a better understanding of the abstract concept in the concrete (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 1993; Kövecses, 2000).

## Metonymy

In metonymy, there is a single conceptual domain and the mapping occurs in the same domain not across the domain (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, Kövecses, 2000). Metonymy provides an access to a conceptual domain through a part of the same domain (or vice versa) or to a part of a conceptual domain through another part within the same domain (Kövecses, 2000). Metonymy is a 'stand-for' relation (i.e., a part stands for the whole or a part stands for another part) within a single domain (Kövecses, 2000).

Metonymies are an important tool to enrich languages. They enable people to know about the world around them. There are different ways in which people think about their daily life. It is a process through which one thing is conceptualized by means of its relation or some association to something other. These are very helpful in structuring our thoughts, feelings, desires and emotions. While using a language, various abstract concepts; thoughts, attitudes, and actions are understood with the help of this device. As far as the conceptualization of the entity is concerned it can be realized via some semantic relations such as part for whole, whole for part, place for institution, contain for container, agent for activity, object for activity, instrument for activity etc. All these metonymies are based on the cultural conceptualizations as well as the shared and personal experiences of the speech community.

In an exocentric compound this culturally shared metonymic knowledge plays a key role. These formations are always culturally based and the experience based of the speech community. Every speech community has some universal and some specific conceptualizations, for example *heart* as a container full of all sorts of feelings is a universally conceptualized metonymy and leg as an object to perform the activity of rejecting something is culture specific.

In the meaning making process metonymy plays an extensive role. The body parts for example can better explain. Some body parts change their meaning from their conventional understanding towards an action or a function. This all happens

due to the underlying shift from a concrete to an abstract concept. Although the body parts are the concrete objects, they help to move towards an abstract concept, due to the typical functions associated with them.

English and Punjabi have exocentric compounds. The data in English is very limited, whereas as per the data collected in Punjabi exhibits the productivity of exocentric compounds. The compounds in these languages have their unique formations as presented in the next section.

### **English Exocentric Compounds**

Bauer ([1983](#)) in his earlier work noted that in English, the exocentric compounds are found in a very small number. However, these exocentric compounds are of the *bahuvirahi* types (someone has X attribute, where X is a compound) like *red skin*, *bull head* and *kill joy* etc. The compounds are known as exocentric, where the semantic head is not expressed. These are also sometimes named as *bahuvrihi* compounds (p. 30). The term *bahuvrihi* is derived from Sanskrit where it means *bahu* means ‘much’ and *rihi* means ‘rice’. Thus, the term *bahuvrihi* means ‘having much rice’. Panini first time used the term *bahuvrihi* for exocentric compounds (Bauer, [2008](#)). In English, compounds are formed without any case markers. Different parts of speech (N, Adj and V) are conjoined to form compound.

### **Punjabi Exocentric Compounds**

The process of compound formation in English-is referred for understanding the complex phenomenon of Punjabi compounds. In Punjabi, the exocentric compounds are very productive as compared to Indo-Germanic languages. Some copulative compounds also carry the metaphoric meaning, for e.g., *sijja:-o-safeid/siah-o-safeed* ‘black and white’. If the compound is taken as colours then it is copulative, but in the metaphoric sense it may be used as ‘owner of everything’. These types of compounds are not very productive. As the main focus of the present study is exocentric compounds, so no attention is paid towards the other types. Various other morphological formations of Exocentric Compounds are discussed below:

Punjabi exocentric compounds do not contain infix that expresses any grammatical function. The compounds are formed with the combination of lexical items from different semantic fields such as body parts, animals, birds, colours etc. The NV formations, *həθ̥ kərṇā* *hatth kernaa* ‘to deceive’, formed with body parts as one of the constituents, are the most productive, but there are also examples of NN *giddəṛ mehmani/giddar mehmani* ‘useless effort’, AN *gəndā*

pani/*ganddapani* ‘wine’, AA ləmma tʃɔ̰la/*lammachoraa* ‘unlimited’, VV həNṣṇa kʰædṇa/*hasnaakhednaa* ‘to be happy’, PP ənđər baar/*andarbaar* ‘everywhere’, VN uđđi xəbər/*uddikhabar* ‘rumor’ and Num. N iik tɪqʰdʌ/iktidh ‘siblings’ combinations. Like in endocentric compounds, constituents do not undergo structural changes. The presence of large number of data reflects that Punjabi exhibits the productivity of exocentric compounds and nullifies Bauer’s (2008) claim.

In Punjabi the exocentric compounds are formed by combining constituents taken from different semantic domains such as animals, body parts, food items, clothing items etc. As, the focus of the paper is only on NN formations, so a few examples of NN’s are illustrated in the Table 1 below to show a variety of NN formations.

**Table 1***Punjabi NN Exocentric Compounds*

S#	Constituent 1	Constituent 2	Compound	Metaphoric Meaning
1.	<i>peid</i> ‘sheep’	<i>chaal</i> ‘walk’	<i>peid chaal</i> ‘sheep walk’	‘mob mentality’
2.	<i>bandar</i> ‘monkey’	<i>phoraa</i> ‘wound’	<i>bandar phoraa</i> ‘monkey wound’	‘a wound that never heals’
3.	<i>kaan</i> ‘crow’	<i>pari</i> ‘fairy’	<i>kaan pari</i> ‘crow fairy’	‘very ugly woman’
4.	<i>paaper</i> ‘cracker’	<i>kunn</i> ‘ear’	<i>paaper kunn</i> ‘cracker ear’	‘very thin ears’
5.	<i>roar</i> ‘stone’	<i>mathiae</i> ‘sweet’	<i>rora mathiae</i> ‘stone sweet’	‘a typical type of sweet, very hard of looks like a stone’
6.	<i>moti</i> ‘beads’	<i>jhara</i> ‘fall’	<i>moti jhara</i> ‘beads fall’	‘measles’
7.	<i>saji</i> ‘right’	<i>banh</i> ‘arm’	<i>saji banh</i> ‘right arm’	‘a very close friend’
8.	<i>paknhari</i> ‘petal’	<i>bull</i> ‘lips’	<i>paknhari bull</i> ‘petal lips’	‘very delicate lips’
9.	<i>jheel</i> ‘lake’	<i>akhaan</i> ‘eyes’	<i>jheel akhaan</i> ‘lake eyes’	‘very deep eyes’
10.	<i>agg</i> ‘fire’	<i>lao</i> ‘burner’	<i>agg lao</i> ‘fire burner’	‘a person who creates problems for others’

### Theoretical Conceptual Frame Work

As it is discussed in the introduction that the study by adopting a data driven approach is interested in presenting some theoretical framework to bring into light how the meaning in exocentric compound arrives at the metaphoric interpretation. So, it is compulsory to have a look on the step-by-step mechanism that works behind the metaphoric interpretation of compounds.

1. Cultural Conceptualization
2. Morphological Formation of the Compound
3. Literal Meaning/s
4. Metonymic Relations
5. Cultural Knowledge
6. Metaphoric Interpretation

#### Cultural Conceptualization

Language as a speech device helps the speakers not only in constructing and reconstituting their experiences, but it also helps in the usage of cultural conceptualizations such as rituals, religion, traditions, emotions/feelings etc. (Sharifian, [2003](#), [2011a](#)). Cultural conceptualizations are the ways adopted for conceptualizing the experiences via culture. These emerge through the negotiation and renegotiation of experiences between the members of a speech community (Sharifian, [2007](#), p. 34). These conceptualizations help in the meaning making process. Various important processes such as schematization and categorization, metaphors and conceptual blends are embraced by them. (Evans, [2004](#); Sharifian, [2003](#), p. 188).

Furthermore, the close interaction between the members of a social group gives birth to these conceptualizations and helps them to think in a similar way. Sharifian ([2003](#)) states that different units and levels of language for e.g., speech acts, idioms, metaphors, discourse markers, etc. come under the umbrella term of cultural conceptualizations (p. 198). In the formation of every exocentric compound the cultural conceptualization plays a fundamental role. These conceptualizations are based on the personal or shared experiences of the speech community and differ from each other due to cultural and language differences, for in Punjabi culture *owl* is conceptualized as a symbol of stupidity, whereas in the western culture it is conceptualized as a symbol of wisdom. This conceptualization infused in the lexical items helps in the morphological formations.

## Morphological Formation of Compound

Compounding being a language universal phenomenon is found in almost all the languages of the world. Every compound is the combination of two or more constituents (Fabb, 1998). The constituents are different parts of speech such as noun, adjective and verb etc. According to Libben (2006), at both lexical and semantic level, the representations of constituents are entangled with the compound they belong to. Every constituent carries some grammatical features such as gender and number marking. The grammatical features not only help in the selection of the constituents but also help in compound formation and arriving at the semantics of the compound. When a compound is formed it carries some meanings; literal (denotative) and the connotative (metaphoric) meaning. The next discussion focuses on the literal meaning.

### Literal Meaning

Literal meaning is the original meaning of a word, the denotative meaning. For example, the compound *tsitta xun/chitta khuun* ‘a selfish person’ can be literally interpreted as ‘a selfish person’. The literal meaning plays a fundamental role in the endocentric compounds where the compound is interpreted literally. In exocentric compounds, no attention is paid towards the literal meaning as the compounds provide a metaphoric meaning. In every exocentric compound there are metonymies working on the constituents to help in conjoining the constituents. For arriving at the metaphoric interpretation, it is compulsory to look at the metonymic relations working on the constituents and the compound and its meaning.

### Metonymic Relations:

The metonymies play an important role in enriching a language and enabling people to enhance their knowledge about the world. Metonymies are the devices for conceptualizing one thing by means of its relation to something else. It is a cognitive process through which the things are understood via some semantic relations for e.g., part for whole, contain for container etc., (Langacker, 1991). In exocentric compounds formation metonymies play an important role as these provide an insight for the relations between constituents. Metonymies also pave the way in establishing a link between a compound and its metaphoric interpretation. These metonymies are always based on the cultural knowledge of the speech community. The next step sheds light on cultural knowledge.

## Cultural Knowledge

The beliefs, rules, norms, values, symbols, constructions of reality, and worldviews all, are the cultural knowledge. This knowledge is shared via folktales, songs, rituals, traditions etc. In the exocentric compounds, this cultural knowledge proves to be a step in arriving at the metaphoric meaning. Finally, the metaphoric interpretation needs to be looked at.

## Metaphoric Interpretation

Metaphors are conceptual trends linked with the thoughts, actions and behavioral attitudes (Lakoff & Johnson, [1980](#)). Barcelona ([2000](#)) defines metaphors as a cognitive mechanism where one thing stands for something else. In exocentric compounds the meaning is always interpreted metaphorically. This metaphoric meaning is based on the cultural knowledge and the metonymic relations, where one of the traits of the constituent is profiled and is co-combined with another constituent to make a new compound with a new meaning. People living in a speech community share same cultural knowledge which helps them in arriving at the metaphoric interpretation of novel constructions.

## Delimitations

So, in this work, from the data collected for thesis, only four examples of NN exocentric compounds, two from English and two from Punjabi are selected for the analysis.

## Methodology

### Data Collection

The work data is collected from different Punjabi dictionaries, literature books and intuitive knowledge of the researcher.

### Sampling

The examples for the analysis are taken from NN compounds only. From both the languages; English and Punjabi only four (2+2), the most popular exocentric compounds are selected for the analysis.

It is already made clear in the introduction that the study is not a comparative analysis in the true sense. The purpose to analyze the English examples is just to show the validity of the framework for languages from different families.

## Data Analysis

### Punjabi NN Compounds

*Example 1*

ʃer/sher ‘lion’ + ɖil/dil ‘heart’ = ‘lion heart’

‘a brave person’

Looking at the above compound *sher dil* ‘lion heart’ and the metaphoric meaning ‘a brave person’, there seems no logical link as the metaphoric meaning is unpredictable from the meaning of the constituents. Yet, for a Punjabi native speaker it is very easy to arrive at the metaphoric meaning. But the question is as to how it is possible? It is very easy to arrive at the meaning, ‘a brave person’ if we understand the step-by-step mechanism working behind the compound formation and its meaning. In this regard the very step is cultural conceptualization.

Culturally, a brave and a daring person are metaphorically called *sher dil* ‘lion heart’. This metaphoric interpretation is not predictable from the meaning of the constituents. Phym and Baayen (2015) in the process of compounding the constituents play a fundamental role, as every constituent carries some specific morphological features; the second step.

Morphologically, two singular, masculine nouns *sher* and *dil* are combined to form the compound. Both the constituents belong to two different domains; animal and body part. Lion works as morphological modifier and heart is a morphological head. Thus, both the constituents are combined together and the compound *sher dil* is formed. The compound gets some meaning which needs to be looked at, that is the third step.

The compound in its literal sense seems endocentric as it gives the denotative meaning ‘heart of a lion’. This meaning is not accurate as the compound is an exocentric one with the metaphoric (connotative) meaning ‘a brave person’. To arrive at this meaning, it is compulsory to look at the metonymies operating on it; the fourth step.

Lion metonymically refers to a person who literally carries the feelings of bravery in his heart. Nevertheless, neither the person nor his bravery is directly specified. So, to arrive at the metaphoric meaning it is compulsory to look at the relations; first one attribute + container is between the constituents and the second one, attribute for attribute between the compound and the metaphoric meaning. As per the first relation the first constituent *sher* ‘lion’ carries some specific

behavioral attributes. Lion here works as a profile determinant as one of his attributes, *bravery* is profiled. The second constituent *dil* works as a container that carries all sorts of feelings such as bravery, cowardice etc. On the other hand, a brave person also carries the same attributes of bravery in his heart. So, on the similarity in the attribute (bravery) the compound *sher dil* is formed and metonymic relation is attribute + attribute. Here comes the question how these metonymic relations are accessed? The answer to this lies in the fifth step, the cultural knowledge.

Lion is universally acknowledged as a brave animal and the king of the jungle. He is not afraid of anything. In Punjabi culture the lion carries the same identity. This identity is based on the culturally fabricated fables and narratives based on the personal or shared experiences about the bravery of the animal. *dil* ‘heart’ is also universally and culturally famous as a seat of feelings, emotions and desires (Sharifian, 2011). A question may be asked from the speech community about the selection of these constituents. According to Ryder (1994), in the formation of new compounds, the already existing compound pattern influences the structure of a new coinage. This is known as the constraining effect of the language. Culturally, the concept of bravery is associated with *sher* ‘lion’ and *dil* ‘heart’ is acknowledged as a seat of all the feelings. Still the question is how does the compound get a metaphoric interpretation? So, let’s move towards the metaphoric interpretation, the final step.

In the compound *sher dil* the meaning gets a shift from a concrete reading towards a metaphoric interpretation of ‘a brave person’. There is a metaphorical link from *sher dil* to ‘a brave person’, and there is a conventional attribute/attribute-metonymy linking ‘lion’ to ‘person’. The native speaker on the basis of background knowledge develops some associations between the existing words and coins new words with new metaphoric interpretation. In this formation, the animal that is used as an agent tells the attributive qualities of a human-being. Thus, it concludes that cultural background knowledge and the similarity of characteristics helps to arrive at the metaphoric interpretation.

#### *Example 2*

kɔ:tʰeɪ/kothae ‘roofs’ + təpɳɪ/tapni ‘climber’= ‘one who climbs the roofs’  
‘vagabond’

In Punjabi culture, a woman who does not stay at home and moves from one house to another is conceptualized as a ‘vagabond’. The compound *kothae tapni* is used for such a woman. Apparently, there seems no logical link between the

compound and its conceptualization, but compound carries some logic behind it. For arriving at the logic, the second step the morphological formation of the compound needs to be looked at.

Morphologically, two constituents from two different domains; a place and a human-being are combined together to form the compound. *kothae* ‘roofs’ is a singular masculine noun used in oblique/locative form. The second constituent *tapni* ‘climber’ is a singular, feminine noun. Although in Punjabi /-ni:/ is used as an adjectival marker, but in this formation, it is used as a gender marker. The constituent is derived from a verb *tap* ‘climb’, but with an addition of /-ni:/ it becomes a noun. The first constituent is a morphological modifier and the second is a morphological head. This combination gives some literal meaning to the compound. The next step sheds light on the literal meaning.

The compound *kothae tapni* in literal sense seems endocentric with the meaning. This is the denotative meaning based on the individual meaning of the constituents. This meaning is not true as the compound is exocentric and carries the meaning of ‘a vagabond’. This meaning is unpredictable from the meaning of the constituents and the interpreted meaning. Apparently, there seems no sense in conjoining the constituents, but there is some logic that resides in the metonymic relations between the constituents and the compound and the metaphoric meaning. So, let’s move towards the metaphoric meaning.

The compound *kothae tapni* carries the metonymic relation of location + actor and attribute + attribute. The constituent *kothae* presents the location and *tapni* denotes the actor. The actor has some specific attributes such as not staying at home and moving around aimlessly. On the other hand, a vagabond also carries the same attributes. One of the attributes; of the actor; moving around aimlessly is profiled and compared with the attributes of a vagabond with the metonymic relation of attribute for attribute to form the compound *kothae tapni*. The cultural knowledge plays its role in arriving at the metonymic relations the next step.

In villages, most of the houses are made of mud and their *kothae* ‘roofs’ are interconnected. No boundary walls are there and it is very easy to move from one roof to another. The woman who moves from one roof to another roof aimlessly is called *tapni*. Here a question takes place about the selection of the constituents why these are selected leaving aside *kandhaan tapni* ‘wall climber’. In fact, conjoined constituents are selected on some logical grounds. In Punjabi language a *ghar* ‘house’ is also understood as *kotha*, but in the language there is no compound like *ghar tapni*, so *kothae* is used. On the other hand, *tapni* is used to tell the activities of the lady; to roam about; on the basis of this knowledge the

compound is formed. Now the main point to be discussed is how the native speaker finally arrives at the metaphoric interpretation; the final step.

The compound *kothae tapni* is a spatio/physical activity. This physical activity shifts towards a metaphoric interpretation ‘vagabond’, an abstract concept. This shift is based on the culturally shared knowledge of the speech community about the constituents and the metonymic relations between them.

### **English NN Compounds**

#### *Example 1*

*puppy + love = ‘puppy love’*

‘the love of a very young and immature person’

Puppy (a small dog) is universally as well as culturally conceptualized as a very loving animal. In English culture, the love of a puppy is metaphorically used for the love of a very young and immature person. The compound *puppy love* is used in the specific terms. Looking at the compound there seems no logical link in the conjoined constituents and the metaphoric interpretation. For getting the logic it is compulsory to look at the second step the morphological formation of the compound.

The compound *puppy love* is the combination of two free constituents, taken from two different domains; animal and feelings. Puppy is a singular masculine noun and holds the status of a morphological modifier, whereas love is a feeling and works as a morphological head. Looking at the constituents the combination seems very illogical, but still it gives some meaning, which needs to be discussed. It is the third step.

The compound in the literal sense gives two meanings; 1) love for puppies or 2) love the way, a puppy does. This meaning is perceived from the individual meaning of the constituents according to denotative knowledge. On the basis of the above given meanings the compound is endocentric, but it is an exocentric one as well, so no meaning is accurate. For arriving at the exocentric interpretation, the compound needs to be looked at within the metonymic relations; the next step.

In the compound *puppy love*, there is a metonymic relation of attribute + attribute. *Puppy*, an animal has some attributes; loving, faithful, affectionate etc. on the other hand a young, immature lover also behaves in the same manner. The attribute of the puppy being affectionate is profiled for the compound formation. This profiled attribute is compared with the same attribute of the person and the

compound *puppy love* is formed. But the issue regarding how to arrive at the metaphoric interpretation is still there. To resolve this issue, cultural knowledge needs to be approached.

In many cultures the folk understanding of the things can be universal as well as cultural (Lafoff & Turner, 1989; Kövecses, 2000). The dog carries both; the universal and cultural understanding of being faithful and loving animal. It is very loyal to his master and moves around his master to show his affection. It is kept to guard the houses. Here the question is why a *dog* is selected and other animals such as *rabbit*, *horse* etc. are not selected. This selection of the animal is entirely based on the behavioural attitude of the animal and its affection with the human-beings. On the other hand, it is also culturally acknowledged that dogs never hate anyone, so a constituent meaning hate that could be an option is not used. Thus, the selection of both the constituents is very logical. Animals have always been the part of stories and there are various fables<sup>2</sup> about the loyalty of the dogs.

The final step is how the metaphoric interpretation is finally arrived at. As per the sixth step the formed compound moves from a literal meaning towards a metaphoric interpretation due to the metonymic relations and the culturally shared knowledge.

### English NN Compounds

#### *Example 2*

*stag + party* = ‘a party where the stags gather’  
‘a party only for men’

A party where only males gather is culturally conceptualized as *stag party*. This is the metaphoric interpretation of the compound. Logically, there seems no remotest link between the meaning the constituents provide and its metaphoric interpretation. The compound is a combination of two words having some morphological features; the knowledge about these features might be helpful in guessing the logic of the combination.

In the compound *stag party* two constituents are combined together. The first constituent is a singular, masculine noun and works as morphological modifier while the second constituent is a singular noun that works as morphological head. With the combination of both the constituents some meaning is generated, so let's move to look at that.

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<sup>2</sup>The hunter and a hound

The compound in its literal sense seems to be an endocentric and can be interpreted as a party where the stags are invited or a party arranged by the stags. These meanings are not correct as the compound is exocentric and its meaning is ‘a party where only the male can go’. Both the constituents belong to two different domains; an animal and an activity (celebration), so it seems very illogical to combine them. But there are some metonymic relations that provide the space for this combination. So, let’s look at them.

In the compound *stag party*, there is metonymic relation of actor + location. In this formation stag works as an actor and party presents the location. Besides this relation, another relation of attribute for attribute between the compound and its metaphoric interpretation is discussed as well. The stag has some attributes such as gathering at the mating season, fighting for the female, moving around the jungle, enjoying a free life etc. The attribute gathering at the mating season is profiled for the compound *stag party*. On the other hand, the sexuality of men is compared with the stag and the compound is formed. In every culture every word carries its unique meaning as per the culturally shared knowledge of the speech community. So, let’s move to the next step; cultural knowledge to get closer to the metaphoric interpretation.

It is culturally shared that the stags live alone and only gather during the mating season and have fight for the female. The selection of the constituents gives birth to a question why the animal *stag* is selected and other animals such as lion, elephant are not selected. The answer is that stags are social stereotypes evoked to categorize social groups. Furthermore, this selection might be due to linguistic conventions. The last step is metaphoric interpretation.

One of the motivating factors in the formation and the metaphoric interpretation of the compound *stag party* is more likely the result of the folk understanding that the speech community has for the behavior of the animal along with the conventions of usage. In English, men are conceptualized as dogs, horses, stags or other animals and are metaphorically called as men are animals (Benczes, [2006](#)).

## Discussion

The data analysis exhibits that in Punjabi the nouns are formed with some affixation as is the case with the example *kothae tapni*. In Punjabi, the oblique form and the gender marking is very common even in the NN compounds. On the other hand, in English this characteristic lacks. Every exocentric compound is metaphoric in nature and every constituent has some specific conceptualization in

the specific culture. Apparently, looking at the compounds, there seems no remotest link between the meaning of the constituents and the metaphoric meaning. But the combination becomes logical as certain metonymies based on cultural conceptualization help not only in the formation of the compound but also arriving at the meaning. The metonymic relations and cultural knowledge help the compound to shift from a literal meaning towards a metaphoric interpretation as given in example *sher dil* 'a brave person' and *puppy love*. An interesting thing to be noted is that in the examples discussed in the data analysis every formation denotes a person.

The data in both the languages is analyzed with the help of proposed step-by-step mechanism to solve the puzzle that how exocentric compounds arrive at metaphoric interpretation from a literal meaning. The newly devised mechanism is applied on Punjabi and English data and it concludes that by following the proposed step-by-step mechanism, it remains no mystery that how an exocentric compound arrives at metaphoric interpretation. As the mechanism is applied on two languages belonging to two different families, equally applicable, so it is hoped that it would be equally applicable to the other languages of the world.

## Conclusion

Exocentric compounds always remain a marginalized category in the research field due to their idiosyncratic meaning and non-productive patterns. The study with the help of data in Punjabi- a New Indo-Aryan language claims that these compounds are not only very productive but their meaning is predictable by following a step-by-step mechanism. The main focus of the study is to devise a new mechanism helpful in arriving at the metaphoric interpretation of these formations not only in the Indo-Aryan languages, but also in the other languages of the world as well.

In the present paper with the help of cognitive linguistic and cultural linguistic, a new step-by-step mechanism is devised to show that how the native speakers arrive at the metaphoric interpretations of novel compounds. The analysis showed that in exocentric compounds two words are combined together on the basis of similarity in the already existing concept or using its particular characteristics. In finding out the similarities the cultural knowledge plays a fundamental role and helps the native speaker to arrive at the metaphoric interpretation of the new coinage. The study also refutes the claims made that exocentric compounds are unanalyzable and nonproductive in their formation.

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